

VZCZCXRO5639
PP RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLU #0694/01 2482029
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 042029Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY LUANDA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5008
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LUANDA 000694

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/03/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [AO](#)

SUBJECT: "THE ANGOLAN" ELECTORAL NEWS BULLETIN, VOL IV

REF: LUANDA 0692 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: AMB DAN MOZENA FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) In This Issue:

- Logistics, Logistics, Logistics...
- MPLA Predicts Big Victory
- UNITA's Forecast for Bie
- PADEPA Rally Drowned Out by MPLA
- FpD, EU Observation Head Grounded by President dos Santos
- Rejected Poll Workers Angry, Confused
- Spot Report from Uige: FNLA on its Last Legs

Logistics, Logistics, Logistics...

12. (SBU) September 4, 2008 was filled with frantic activity as election officials struggled to get the people and materials in place for the September 5 legislative elections.

The large crowds of poll workers, party delegates, and civil society observers waiting for credentials at municipal election headquarters in many parts of the country made it readily apparent that election officials underestimated the tasks of credentialing poll station workers and moving them to their respective stations. At one municipal election headquarters in Benguela Province, our observation teams saw Angolan military helicopters moving with election materials and poll workers out to the field. A large crowd of people sitting on suitcases filled the street as poll workers waited for credentials and transport to remote polling stations; poll workers said they anticipate staying in the field for two to three days. In contrast, our Huambo team visited several rural polling stations to find pre-positioned staff and material; poll workers said they had been there for several days and were sleeping in the station to protect the ballots and other sensitive items.

13. (SBU) In an encouraging bit of on-the-spot decision making and expediency, our observers report that some Huambo and Uige municipalities have dispensed with the electronic credentialing process for poll workers, party delegates and civil society observers, and are instead issuing paper credentials. While opposition leaders are quick to express their frustration with the National Electoral Commission (CNE) and its local entities, CNE officials in turn point out that many political parties and observation groups waited until the last minute to provide the documentation necessary to be credentialed.

14. (C) In a discouraging development to reftel paragraph 5, the USAID-funded Plataforma Eleitoral reported that as of 2150 on September 4, after two days of waiting with over 200 civil society observers at the CNE credentialing center, only

28 observers had been accredited and the rest had been informed that they would not be accredited and should return home. The Plataforma also reported that over 100 observers had been accredited in Huambo.

MPLA Predicts Big Victory

15. (C) On September 4, P/E Assistant attended an "off the record" MPLA briefing for election observers in Luanda. At the briefing, four members of the MPLA's Bureau Politico confidently predicted "without a doubt" the ruling party would win a two-thirds majority in the September 5 legislative elections, and would then work to re-write the constitution. One senior MPLA official said the party expects its 3 million card-carrying members to vote MPLA, and that an additional 1 million voters will also vote for the party. The official added that UNITA should expect heavy losses across the country. According to the presenters, the source of the MPLA's confidence comes from a series of long-term polls conducted nationwide by the party that indicate a big day is in store for the MPLA. Presenters stated the CNE may release provisional results as early as the afternoon/evening of Saturday September 6th.

16. (C) COMMENT: If voter turnout is high, as many observers project, four million votes out of an electorate of over 8 million may not earn the MPLA a two-thirds majority. In addition, MPLA membership is a prerequisite for employment in many, if not most, rural areas, and civil society groups have reported that even people wish to work as polling agents for the elections were first required to join the MPLA. This

LUANDA 00000694 002 OF 002

leaves the true allegiance of the MPLA's card-carrying members somewhat in doubt. END COMMENT

UNITA's Forecast for Bie

17. (C) In a meeting with our Bie observation team, UNITA's Bie campaign team stated they will consider holding on to four of the five provincial seats won in the 1992 election an electoral victory for UNITA in the province. They further predicted that either the MPLA or PRS, with the support of the many Chokwe people who moved to Bie during the war, will take the 5th seat.

PADEPA Rally Drowned Out by MPLA

18. (C) An EU Observer reported he was present at a PADEPA rally on September 3 in Luanda. The rally was set up on a local soccer field, with a stage and area for supporters to gather and participate in the party's final gathering before the end of the campaign. As the rally was set to begin, a truck decked out in MPLA colors and flags drove onto the field, and parked between the stage and the gathered PADEPA supporters. MPLA supporters then began blasting loud music, drowning out the PADEPA politicians. As PADEPA supporters rushed to fistbumps with the MPLA crew, the PADEPA leaders pleaded for calm and a peaceful resolution to the potential conflict. When police arrived, the MPLA supporters produced authorization from the municipal government to demonstrate on the soccer field until September 4, after the end of the legislative campaign. The PADEPA crowd, which had no such permit, was forced to abandon their rally. The incident provides some independent verification to opposition parties' complaints of MPLA interference in their rallies.

FpD, EU Observation Head Presidential Air Travel

19. (C) FpD President Filmeno Viera Lopes lashed out at the GRA's "scandalous" closure of airspace around the country each time President dos Santos traveled to the provinces

during the campaign. The party noted several incidences in which their leaders missed key rallies due to last-minute flight cancellations when the airspace was closed with little or no notice. The party mockingly called Angola a "country which comes to a standstill in order for His Excellency, the President of the Republic to fly." FpD is not the only group to be affected; the head of the EU Observation Mission, Louisa Morgantini, was stuck in Cabinda for "many hours" due to the President's trip to Malange. Morgantini told Poloff she intended to write an open letter to the President about the closure, explaining that it "just isn't done." NOTE: Airspace closures take place whenever the President travels, not only during electoral campaigns. END NOTE.

Rejected Poll Workers Angry, Confused

¶10. (SBU) Our Benguela team reports that electoral authorities in the province overestimated the number of poll workers they would need, as approximately 35,000 were trained and only 25,000 are being employed. The leaves 10,000 people heading to the polls disgruntled by the loss of 200 USD per day, plus food and transport. EU observers reported seeing a "large crowd" of angry people, such that they dared not approach, in front of a Luanda municipal headquarters September 3rd; people at the periphery of the crowd told the observers that people were angry to find they had not been selected and were unsure how the CNE arrived at its decisions of whom to employ.

Spot Report from Uige: FNLA on its Last Legs

¶11. (C) After meetings with MPLA, UNITA, and FNLA leaders in Uige, our observation team reported a marked contrast between the leadership and staff of Angola's three historic parties. UNITA's leaders were "young and energetic," the MPLA's leaders were "middle-aged and comfortable-looking," whereas the FNLA's leaders and staffers were "old." The team bluntly stated that, unless the FNLA finds a way to attract young and vibrant leadership and supported, the party will die out - both literally and figuratively - in the province in the next five years.

MOZENA